

## Description:

# Clearing Eider Down

### About:

Traditional down harvesting has been important in the north. There are different manners to collect the feathers. In Bjørnsund, Norway, we learnt about the traditional approach to collect and clear eider down. The eider is a sea-duck that nests along the northern shores.

### Collecting:

The hen of the eider duck will pluck soft down from her own feather coat to line the nest for the eggs. When the chickens have left the nest, the down is left. People collect the down from the nests in order to use it for example in duvets. It used to be a substantial income for people living in the coastal regions of Norway. Today, there are fewer eider ducks along the coast, possibly because of the access (or lack thereof) to fish.

### Clearing:

We took part in a workshop at Bjørnsund leirskole, where we were shown how to clean the eider down. The down is often full of sticks and straws of grass and needs to be cleaned. For this, the Norwegians use a “dunharpe”, a wooden frame with pieces of string attached. The down is placed on top of the strings, and then you drag a piece of wood across the strings so that the dirt falls through. Eventually all of the down will also pass through the string, and then you place it on top again and start over. It is quite a slow process! You will need down from approximately 60 nests to make one duvet, so there is a great amount of work for just one duvet.

### More information:

Watch the video on [youtube](#) or through our website.

